

Growth Groups Study on James 4 – 10-12 Nov 20

Submitting to God – Knowing His Will

Background and Context – for Remembrance this year we thought about the nature of time and the brevity of life, taken from v13-17. Chapter 4 of this letter is really about committing to the Lord in all areas of our lives and understanding that we should live according to his will, not our own desires. This is pretty radical thinking and completely at odds with what comes naturally to our sinful hearts, which tend towards selfish indulgence in all that the world has to offer apart from God.

Pray – For insight and understanding as you read God’s word and discuss what you find.

Read – James 4

Think and Discuss – What should characterise us as Christians compared with those who do not know God and follow the ways of this world?

Read – Proverbs 3:1-18

Think and Discuss – How do the ways of Wisdom contrast with the ways of the world??

Back to **James 4**...

- Does it surprise you that James is writing v1-3 to those who profess to be Christians?
- Why are our motives for what we do so important? (v3)
- What does it mean to have ‘friendship with the world’? (v4)

Think and Discuss – Why does James accuse these people of being ‘double-minded’ (v8), trying to ‘have a foot in both camps’ by being friends with God and the world at the same time? Is this ever true of us?

- What does (v5) mean? Look at the footnotes (NIV) to help your understanding.
- What urgent actions are needed from these people? (v8-10)
- What does it mean to ‘humble yourself before the Lord’ so that he can lift us up? (v10)
- Why is slander (and gossip) given such importance here? (v11-12)

Think and Discuss – Is it ok for Christians to plan for the future and to go about their business, making a good living? What could make this right or wrong?

- Why does James liken our lives to the morning mist? (v14)
- Does the brevity of life help to put things into context for you? (v14)
- Why is it important to take account of God’s will for our lives when we plan? (v15)
- Why do you think it is a sin simply **not** to do things that should be done? (v17)

Apply – Ask yourselves whether truthfully, you still have a ‘foot in both camps’ in terms of loving God and loving the world. Why does God’s Spirit jealously long for our whole hearts (v5) and for total commitment to the One who saves us. What happens to the man with a foot in the boat and a foot on the shore? Splash!

Things for prayer:

Give thanks for our great salvation, that we are 'bought with a price' and that we are given the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Perhaps come with humility (v10) and contrition, asking for grace, cleansing and purification of heart.

Pray that we might be wholehearted in our love and devotion to God and that we would leave the world behind to follow Jesus as true disciples. Pray for help and strength, claiming the promise that as we come near to God, He will come near to us (v8)

Pray for our nation and our effective witness as individuals and as a church and that we proclaim the gospel faithfully during this difficult time.

Pray for Hilda mourning the loss of Bill. For Marin and Jane Shaw coping with continued recovery and property damage. For Lynda Macarthy for continued healing and peace of mind, Gill Wells (and the family) and Josie (friend of Jean and Morgan who had a serious fall). Pray for our young people as they have re-started 'Ignite' and for the new folk who have joined our fellowship and may be finding it hard to get to know everyone during lockdown.

Pray for each other's needs at this time...